PANCHAYAT LANDLORDISM VERSUS PEASANT ECONOMY

PROF. N. G. RANGA

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The leaders of Sarvodaya and some political parties opine that Gramdan leads to social equality and maximum agricultural productivity. Professor Ranga and other peasant leaders, on the other hand, declare that this new type of landlordism is economically unproductive, socially disastrous and politically undemocratic.

The Indian Peasants' Institute, a research bureau for the uplift of peasants and other rural-toiling masses, intends to bring out brochures and booklets on vairous problems. The Institute also proposes to publish a regular journal shortly.

This little brochure, a collection of speeches and writings of Professor Ranga, explains, in brief, the implications of Gramdan and stresses the need for retaining the existing **peasant economy** with peasant proprietorship, without which domocratic freedom cannot survive. We trust that this publication will be found timely, interesting, and thought-provoking.

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IMPLICATIONS OF PANCHAYAT LAND-OWNERSHIP

We, the two hundred millions of Indian peasants, are the biggest group among the broad masses of self-employed and self-governing producers of this ancient land, the mother-country of world's family economy. We live and wish to continue to live by the fruits of our productive and creative labour. We do not have to nor do we wish to exploit any group of toilers in order that we may work and live. Ours is primarily a non-exploitative source of living and employment. We employ ourselves in the cultivation of land and in the production of primary goods needed by modern society for the continuation and furtherance of its civilised existence. The most significant hall-mark of our economic life is that we are not the employees of any one to be exploited by him nor do we wish to live by employing others and exploit them. we are the foundation for the building up of any self-governing economic democracy in our country.

The four crores and more artisans are also productive but non-exploitative toilers. They too carry on their productive activities mostly through their family economy. They are also economically self-governed, and wish to retain that status. Even their Supplies cum Sales Cooperatives recognise this status and try to sustain it. We have always looked upon them as our comrades in this historic loyalty and age-long tradition of economic self-government and decentralised Socialistic life based upon our family economy. It is because of this that we,

the peasants of India, have remained loyal consumers of the products of our cottage industries, and handicrafts and their four crores of artisans and kalakars.

We challenge anyone to prove that we have so far failed to serve our country to any significant extent in any vital direction when the nation has called upon us to produce any primary commodity after assuring us the minimum required social environment. After the partition of the country, we were asked to produce more Jute to save the nation from Pakistan's threat, and we rose to the occasion. When the country was faced with food deficit and when minimum required economic facilities were provided, we adopted the Japanese and other methods and produced more than the targets set for the First Five Year Plan. We have thus shown the resilience of our self-governing family economy even when the Government has not assured us any remunerative level of prices, when even economic minimum prices were not assured to most of our crops and when the export policy was militating against our Oilseeds exports and their oils. We have brought many times more waste land under cultivation with the least bit of official assistance and more economically than what all the State and Union Governments have done with all their funds, organisational and power resources during these ten years of Swaraj.

We have thus stood the test of history and displayed our capacity to march in step with all other sections of society, and in addition, strengthened the foundation for the growth of econmic self-government of our country and economic independence of our toilers. Is it not then tragically anti-national and undemocratic for any responsible national political parties and their leaders

to take it for granted that the family economy of peasants has failed, that its self governance has no more use for the Socialistic society, the society that is sought to be built up in this Swaraj India ?

Why then have the leaders of the Political Parties chosen not only to ignore the constructive and productive role we have been playing in our social economy but also the contribution we have been making to the very creation of a really humane, democratic and decentralised Gandhian type of Socialism ? Why do they think that our essentially non-exploitative, self-governing, and freedom-yielding peasant-economy based so much on self-employment is not conducive to social well-being, and to the creation of a really free society ?

Is it not the teaching of Mahatma Gandhi and also every Socialist to love Democracy, and decentralised economic units of self-employment buttressed by cooperatives and State Aids and not controls and masters ? Do they not desire economic self-government in such governance ? Why do they not agree that such institutions as the peasant and artisan economies which have withstood the disastrous challenges of Capitalism and Communism and which are now being restored or recognised by some of the communist countries should be highly prized and rehabilitated ?

The leaders of the political parties may say that they have not decided against these institutions but have only tried to place an alternative before our masses of peasants and artisans. Can they say that the merits of their favourite alternatives, Cooperative cultivation and Panchayat landownership and cultivation, as are implied in

the Gramdan move, have anywhere yielded consistently over a period of two or three decades more produce, greater freedom, less wastage of natural and other resources and more economical use of national resources and higher quantum of essential leisure and happiness to the people employed thereon than what has been possible under peasant economy? Is it not a fact, on the other hand, that peasant economy has not destroyed land, nor has it been accused of encouraging too high overhead charges or holding society to ransom as so many other systems under both capitalistic end communistic dispensation have done ?

Certainly it is true that peasants are badly in need of cooperative organisation for the supplies of capital, implements, machinery, manures, drought cattle services and warehouses, processing, dehydration and frigidaire facilities etc. in addition to much structural equipment. For want of these facilities and for their dependence upon such key services, too high a proportion of their costs of production is being paid. These institutions have come to be loaded with many defects and undesirable economic and unsocial practices. All such disabilities are a challenge to the statesmanship of the national leaders of our political parties but not an excuse for turning against these great institutions, the symbols of freedom and progress. It is the combined duty to government and peasants and all political and other leaders to provide our peasant economy with the badly needed cooperative equipment.

It is true that the organisational and planning side of agriculture under peasant economy can be very much improved to the advantage of both the peasants concerned and the country. Such an improvement can

be best achieved by State effort as most of the improvements needed by way of irrigation, flood-protection, prevention of soil erosion, overcoming pests and cattle epidemics are too costly and demand organised State efforts. Crop planning can also be better made if peasants as well as the local representatives of National and State Planners can confer and cooperate with each other. Such a constructive effort is being made in England without endangering the farm family economy. Our planners got the idea of village planning from England for agricultural management but have gone to the other extreme and suggested the very elimination of our more progressive peasant economy. The non-Communist political parties have to answer the question as to why they want Gramdan, that is, Village Panchayat Ownership and management and cultivation of the lands in the ayacut of the village. Is it because they think it will yield better crops or create better or higher incentives for more or better productive efforts? Can it be because village collective management of land and cattle and implements and finances will be more efficient, economical and constructive? Is it wise for them to overlook the proved merits of the peasant economy, undermine the morale of more than hundred million peasants and their dependents and weaken their incentives for better and higher efforts by inaugurating a national campaign in favour of the alternative economy, another system of landlordism and mangement and against the continuation of the existing ownercultivation, and self-employment economy of peasantry? We would like to know whether the leaders who support Gramdan landownership and profess faith in democracy have cared to study the nature, magnitude

and incidence by way of human suffering caused by the defective working of Panchayats and Cooperatives, that is, the loss of faith and interest in the so-called democratic elections and the amount of litigation and administrative complaints and counter-complaints which have accumulated during the past ten years over their almost incorrigible defective working ? If they had done that, they would certainly not have hailed so readily and lightheartedly the idea of Panchayat management of land as a better alternative to peasant economy.

They might have turned a blind eye towards the notorious defects and evils that have shown themselves in the working of Cooperatives and Village Panchayats of our country, because of their idealistic belief that all the most important decisions would be taken unanimously. But the millions of the people of South Indian States who have organised and worked a much larger number of these institutions and worked them for a much longer period than the people o North Indian States know to their bitter cost, what it is to be on the wrong side of the majority, They also know how difficult it is to have impartial administration and also judicious-minded ministry. They realise how dangerous it would be when the whole of the land much the most important source of employment and living of most people in any village comes to be owned and controlled by the Cooperative Farm or by the Village Panchayat which will be exposed to the unbearable politics of factions and castes. We would like the political leaders to know that it was our peasants who have so far displayed greater enthusiasm in asking for the registration of cooperative societies and

also for the establishment of Village Panchayats. And therefore we ought to be given a more careful hearing when we say that there are limits beyond which these institutions ought not to be loaded with responsibilities which encroach upon essential and primary freedoms of everyday economic life of the masses.

We are quite prepared to face the challenge of these alternative systems of land management and agricultural production and employment, that is, cooperative farming and village landownership and management of land under the socalled Gramdan conception. We are convinced that our peasant economy yields better crops per acre, an immensely nobler set of incentives and an incomparably greater degree of freedom and sense of personal and family freedom and independence than can ever be possible under either the namesake Chinese cooperative farming or the Soviet systems of Kolkhoze or Solkhoze farms of the Gramdan Villages.

Now that the vexed but long-delayed question of putting a ceiling upon land-holdings is being settled all over the country, it will not be open even to Communists to say that we, the peasants, can harbour any elements of exploitation. We want to cultivate our holdings, either owned or rented by our family labour and we seek the assistance of society in completing farm-operations during rush-periods of work as our productive work is of national consequence. We are prepared to pay to agricultural workers, whose cooperation becomes essential during certain periods, all such wages, allowances etc. which the society estimates as leaving no scope for exploitation by us or by anyone. Ours is a non-exploitative economy, par excellence and we do notneed nor do we believe in exploiting anyone :We

believe in Guild Socialism at its best and our holdings are the guarantee of our employment by ourselves. Therefore we do not want either a Cooperative Farm Management or Village Panchayat Board, with all its politics to impinge on our freedom in managing and cultivating our holdings and turn us into its tools, hands or slaves. We do want the Panchayat Board to cooperate, guide and advise us merely as a friendly organisation and not as a master. Similarly we are keen on organising Service Cooperatives for providing us various services but only to strengthen and not to replace our peasant family economy. We know that this Gramdan can be organised and run only by the managerial, professional and the privilegentsia.

In an entirely doctrinnaire or Communistic manner our National Planners have decided that any kind of cooperation short of cooperative farming cannot be truly cooperative and that cooperative farming alone would be more productive, economical and conducive to the greater prosperity of our peasants. Is it not presumptuous of them to try to skip over all the essential and intermediary stages of helping agriculture through Multi-purpose Service Cooperatives and try to superimpose, all at once, the most difficult and complicated cooperative farming, when actually all the Governments in India and the public have failed during the past half-century to develop Cooperative Credit, Supplies, Storing, Processing and Marketing even to the tune of 5% of the needs of our peasantry. To reinforce their ill-placed faith in cooperative farming and to justify their impatience to start a nation-wide campaign for it, they have sent a delegation to Communist China and derived

satisfaction that the Majority had also recommended cooperative farming, in the light of the experience of the so-called cooperative farming of China. Unfortunately for them, the Minority consisting of a Registrar of Cooperative Societies and the General Secretary of All India Cooperative Union has reported the truth that the Chinese Cooperative Farming is mostly collective farming, born out of violence or the atmosphere of violence and it could not be said that it is either more productive or economical. They were not in favour of cooperative farming as against peasant family farm economy. We know that the Communist Governments of Yugoslavia and Poland have had to abandon their prejudices against peasant economy and fascination for cooperative farming because they have found the former to be far superior to the latter. They have had to give the choice to peasants and accept their choice in favour of peasant proprietorship and give them the right of permanent cultivation and ownership. We also know that in all the experiments made in hundreds of regions all over our country, nowhere have the evils associated either with majority rule or with official red-tapism or with the slackening of incentives been eliminated and the results have been very discouraging to the members. In the debate in the Lok Sabha held in August '57, all but one non-official speaker warned Government against favouring cooperative farming. Even such experts on cooperation consulted by the Planning Commission as Sir Molcolm Darling and Mr. Otto Schiller have advised in favour of encouraging self-employed peasants to work on cooperative lines in all organisational spheres, apart from actual farming. No less a statesman than Shri Rajagopalachari has also warned against depriving peasants

of their land and self-employed status. So we ask the Government why it should be so much against our peasants and our system of using the land as the source of our employment and freedom, and why it is so keen on placing us at the disposal of a Cooperative Society and its officials and the hierarchy of the departmental officials of Government who would impose upon us their will and pleasure, red-tapism, inefficiency, corruption and too heavy overhead charges ?

We know, however, that there is a deadly desire on the part of the Planners and administration to increase their hold upon every walk of life and thus gain a strangle-hold upon the social economy of our masses and concentrate all the power in their hands and levy their tolls in material and moral terms. So they are cons tantly trying to capture the mind of the Prime Minister by holding before him the rosy prospect of easily collecting all the surplus foodgrains from a few lakhs of Cooperatives to feed the towns and their powerful and clamorous and organised urban peoples instead of having to negotiate with the crores of small-holders and depend upon their free decisions as to how much to eat and to sell. So they say there is a crisis of organisation. We are prepared to take up their challenge if Government are prepared to back us in our productive and organisational efforts. Let it organise Service Cooperatives in all our villages. Let it supply all the credit we need at reasonable rates of interest, and also place manures, latest implements etc. at our disposal through Cooperatives. Let it relieve us of all worries over the marketing risks for our produce by offering to purchase

at remunerative levels of prices announced an year ahead of the sowing time and fix and enforce reasonable rates of wages and rents based upon prices for our produce. Let it organise National Insurance Fund against floods and droughts and crop Insurance at State levels. We will then be prepared to face all the risks involved in a higher degree of organisation and utilise Panchayats, Cooperatives and their administrators. We are confident that reinforced as we hope to be by Service Cooperatives, we can play an effective and productive role in our planned economy and contribute more to the development of our country than the proletariat and professions because we would be self-employed and free besides being the most constructively integrated element in planned economy, thanks to our Self-Governing Service Cooperatives.

Let us also assure Government and the Prime Minister that we are not such mad people as to hang on to our too small-holdings even when there are other better paying and more freedom-yielding employments. Actually there has been a growing drift away from our villages in search of more certain income-yielding urban employments, so great is the pressure on land and so pressing is the need for alternative sources of living. Therefore, it makes no meaning to us to be told that cooperative farming will economise labour and the few of us who may be employed on the cooperative farm may earn more per day or per annum while all others go unemployed. To expect the millions who would become unemployed and displaced to feel satisfied that as a result of their loss of tiny holdings and of their freedom from unemployment

and starvation for the few weeks, a few lakhs of more fortunate of them might get greater incomes for longer periods is not a practical method of planning. It is nither statesmanship nor just to deprive so many peasants of their existing source of living in order to provide fuller employment only to a few big Peasants.

Let our planners and Prime Minister wait until full employment prospects come on our economic horizon and let them help our administration and Majority Rule with the Village Panchayats and Co-operatives to become honest, efficient and really public spirited and then ask our small-holders to decide as between their attachment for their holdings and the all-round freedom they confer and the promised higher incomes from Cooperative Farming or urban jobs. Till then it will be inviting our country to economic and social suicide to try to mislead our crores of small-holders to exchange their freedom-laden holdings for the uncertain employment in a Cooperative Farm depending upon the sweet will and pleasure of the Supervisors, Managers, brigade labour leaders etc.

We shall have no objection to the Government trying its experiments in cooperative farms organised on the lands belonging to it with the cooperation of the landless agricultural workers and gaining experience in that form of farm economy. We are prepared for such healthy competition. We are convinced that our peasant economy will emerge successful as being capable of giving the largest degree of ennobling freedom and inspiring our peasants to give their best to the nation by the display of all their creative and productive capabilities.

To create employment for oneself and for one's family from out of one's landholding is to increase the area of economic freedom and not to commit a sin. To seek economic freedom and to avoid wage slavery is the most constructive and divine effort a man can make to justify the divinity in him and not to commit a sin. To use land inherited by him for non-exploitative, constructive and productive purposes and to produce many times more from it than what is sown on it is to make God's earth productive and freedom-yielding and not to lead any sinful way of life. A small-holding peasant who hugs his holding and helps it yield freedom for himself and for society and employment for his family is the noblest architect of freedom and creator of employment and not an unproductive or exploitative previlegentsia as is the case with so many in professions. Mother Earth in their possession becomes enriched and is enabled to bear productive and heavy crops and is free from the slavery of barrenness and to treat such land as being imprisoned in the hands of smallholders is to mistake the vocation of Mother Earth. To separate the small-holders from Mother Earth is to cause painful divorce between her and her natural protector and promoter.

We hasten to assure our nation that we are convinced that our peasant economy has been evolved as the most economical, productive, and capable of evoking sustained and soul-satisfying incentives for hard and prolonged work, and self-sacrificing interest. And the Japanese, and Danish peasant economies are the standing examples of what could be got out of peasants and their freedom, if only they are supported and aided as they

ought to be by both Government and Service Cooperatives. We, therefore, demand our National Planners to shed their dangerous and unfair prejudice against our peasant economy and to propose to aid and encourage us and we promise the maximum possible yields per acre and highest national production in the most economical manner.

We, therefore, ask the political parties to pause and consider whether we do not deserve a better treatment at their hands. Why should we be thrown to the tender mercies of officials of either Cooperatives or Panchayats and also of their factions? Why should we be denied the freedom that we have enjoyed for centuries in actual process of finding employment on land and gaining not only our means of living but also displaying our initiative, enterprise and creative impulses without being goaded, scolded, supervised and superimposed by managers and masters even if they are to be appointed by an elected management board of the Majority? How can it be a step towards progress to ask our twenty crores of peasants to embrace Chinese type of Panchayat Landlordism after they had emerged triumphantly in their 30 year-long struggle against the Talukadari, Zamindari landlordism all over India ?. How is it justifiable for the political parties to agree among themselves to demoralise our self-employed people, to undermine and subvert our peasant economy, to bring down the faith of society in the value of our work, services and all the wealth that we have invested in our smallholdings? Before they make up their minds, we want them to know that we are convinced that our

economy is progressive, freedom-yielding and productive and most independent of governmental and other privilegentsia and least amenable to exploitation and that we are all fast becoming politically conscious. We hope they will not like to frighten the millions of peasants of U.P., Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and West Bengal who have been liberated from the clutches of landlords only within this Swaraj era of the loss of their holdings. Let them also remember that history has proved that such people with such convictions and backed by such numbers and knowledge of the failure of all rival systems to yield either higher production or greater freedom or more widespread sense of happiness can never be defeated or cheated or destroyed.

We have every right to demand that Government should give us its whole-hearted support. It should give clear and sincere appreciation of our unique services and assistance to Society and Government. All the self-employed masses, especially ourselves and Kalakars depend mostly upon our own resources and wits for finding employment and all other sources of living and, therefore, they cause no worry to society or Government. On the other hand almost all the educated people and industrial workers and most of the professional people have to be specially looked after in some way or the other and their disputes become the special concern of society and their threats of strikes or lock-outs, the demonstrations for various concessions from either Government or from their professional rivals or employers are a constant threat to social peace and Governmental stability. It is the duty of society to feel grateful to us. Therefore government ought to display

at least as much affection, care and solicitude towards our needs as to those who are a constant worry to them.

Surely this is not asking for much. Instead of conceding this minimum demand, why does the Central Government devote such huge funds and highest-level brains to build up challenges in order to weaken the nation's faith in our peasant economy? Way have the mighty and most influential elements in the Governmental leadership rushed to Yelwal and proceeded to ask our peasants to throw away their lands into the so-called voluntarily accruing village panchayat pools of land and thus undermine peasant economy? Is not their manoeuvre very much like a timed bomb against the decentralised, freedom-born and freedom-giving peasant economy?

I too initiated Land Reform Movement

It is most unfortunate that persons holding responsible positions in Political parties indulge in repeating the false accusation that I am opposed to Land Reforms, whatever they might mean by that term, in spite of my repeated statements that I am in favour of fixing ceiling on land holdings and protecting Tenants of Ryotwari Pattadars. I may say that I was the convener of the Agricultural Sub-committee of the Economic Programme Committee of the Congress (1948), appointed while Mahatma Gandhi was alive and we had unanimously favoured these reforms on the basis of the draft presented by myself. Both myself and Sri Ramaswami Reddiar, the former Chief Minister of Madras prepared the minority report of the Agrarian Reforms Committee (1949) appointed by the then Congress President,

Sri Rajendra Prasad and we favoured both the ceilings and tenancy legislation. We however pleaded for parity between rural and urban peoples, and therefore suggested that similar efforts should be made to fix a ceiling on urban properties also. We wanted the ceiling to be fixed at atleast five times the basic holding, whereas the majority wanted it to be at three times. The Planning Commission has now suggested that it might be fixed at six times the basic holding. So how can our minority Report be said to be less revolutionary than the Commission? On the other hand when we demanded in the last Parliament 1956, a ceiling of Rs. 2500/- per mensum upon urban incomes, in contrast to the proposed maximum income for peasants of Rs. 300|- per month, the Commission's spokesman or Prmeier Nehru refused to accept that proposed ceiling of Rs. 30,000/- per annum for professional, Commercial and industrial cadres because the Commission was not in favour of distributing poverty. Are we less revolutionary or radical than the Commission, when we agree to a ceiling on land holdings, while the Commission refuses to accept it on urban incomes ?

Coming to the question of Ryotwari Tenants, the Kisan Sammelan has been asking for their protection ever since 1935. I have pleaded for it in all my writings throughout the past twenty five years. The "Economic Programme of the Kisan Congress" (Sammelan) published in 1949 has given detailed suggestions as to how to protect the interests of these much neglected tenants. Therefore, I trust that the public will take note of these historical truths, and refuse to give any credence to propaganda of interested individuals.

IMPENDING THREAT TO SMALL-HOLDERS

The main point on which I differ from the Planning Commission is regarding its proposals to liquidate all small-holdings and replace them by the so-called basic holdings, cooperative farms and, now, Gramdan Panchayat Land-ownership. I do not consider this proposal as relevant to Land Reforms at all. Therefore it is unfair on the part of certain interested persons in political parties to go about saying that I am opposed to land reforms. Anyone who has any respect for the historical development of this conception of genuine land reforms should be prepared to recognise how I had been pleading so consistently and against great odds ever since 1931 for the liquidation of all Zamindaris and other functionless intermediaries, for the protection of all tenants under all tenures and for the fixing of ceilings on lands and all other properties and for parity of treatment between agricultural, commercial and professional interests.

The real point at issue is whether the Commission's proposals to liquidate small-holdings and to bring in a worse type of landlordism by way of Cooperative farm or village Panchayat land-ownership, can at all be treated to be a progressive move.

How can the Commission justify its suggestion that all small-holders should be persuaded to pool their

holdings into Cooperative Farms or Gramdan Panchayats on the ground that the cultivation of such holdings is uneconomical when it is unable to hold out any hopes of alternative employment to them, as and when large proportion of them are sure to be deprived of even these inadequate sources of subsidiary employment? Everyone recognises the truth that the cultivation of bigger-holdings does not need so many workers whereas the cultivation of smaller holdings is highly labour-intensive. Indeed it has confessed its incapacity to indicate any plan or proposal to help the more helpless but less numerous agricultural workers, not to speak of its inability to show any alternative employment to those peasants who are sure to become unemployed, if and when their holdings are merged in Panchayat holding. The Commission has itself said that the solution for five months of unemployment of agricultural workers does not lie merely in the redistribution of land. Under such circumstances, will it not be socially disastrous and economically unmanageable to ask small-holders also to give up the small quantums of employment they manage to find or create on their holdings and join the ranks of all other under-employed and unemployed masses and compete for the much more limited employment to be found on the Cooperative farms or under Panchayat Landownership? How can such a Proposal be a reform, or a move towards progress?

There is also a wrong impression that the proposed formation of basic economic holdings and the fixation of ceilings would solve the problem of the great majority of our peasants and that the small-holders who will have to be liquidated would not be too many. The facts

emerging out of the All India Census of Land Holdings conducted by the Planning Commission in 1953-54 belie these impressions. The peasants who own less than 15 acres per family form 90% in Andhra, 81% in Bombay, 87% in Madhya Pradesh, 91% in Madras, 82% in Rajasthan out of all the holdings and they own 40% to 50% of all the cultivated land. That the formation of only basic and bigger holdings can employ and interest much smaller numbers of people is indicated by the fact that those who own between 10 and 15 acres are only 6·7% in Andhra, 10.2% in Bombay, 8.7% in Madhya Pradesh, 6.5% in Madras and 10.1% in Rajasthan out of all the landowners. But they own 12% to 14% of the total land and this is the only group which may be said to stand to gain under the Commission's proposals.

There is no difference of opinion regarding the need for fixing a ceiling upon landholdings or for protecting the interests of tenants. Actually almost all the State Governments have either passed necessary legislation or have formulated proposals for such legislation. The Census of Land Holdings has also revealed that all those who own upto 15 acres of land would not be affected by tenancy legislation since they cultivate their own lands except in emergencies. Nowhere has it so far been claimed that the ceiling should be fixed at anything less than 3 times the basic holdings and those who own less than 30 acres are anything between 94% to 97% of all the peasant-owners. Therefore the Commission's proposals for ceilings and tenancy can be said to affect directly only 3% to 6% of landholdings, without having any special deleterious effects. We are all in favour of this. But this is not what the Commission is really

serious about. It plans for the liquidation of the 80% to 90% of our owner-cultivated holdings, through their absorption into basic and bigger holdings. Cooperative farms and Gramdan Panchayat holdings. But it ignores the fact that Soviet Russia and even Peoples China are obliged to allow their peasants to own small-holdings, called Kitchen Gardens of the first catagory, i. e. less than 5 acres as they have found such peasants to become most efficient producers. And such peasants owning such small-holdings form 51% to 67% of our total land-owners. Are we to dispossess just these peasants even when we know that USSR has been providing them with such small-holdings, after her bitter experiences since 1917. The Polish Communist Government has reinstated Peasants in their old holdings. So. how can its proposal to liquidate them be a reform or an indication of progress?

It is interesting to note that the Communist Chief Minister of Kerala has frankly opposed the move for Co-operative farming, possibly because the holdings below 10 acres form 98% of all the holdings in the area.

Who can justify the Commission's proposals to exempt from ceiling huge holdings of cane, jute and cotton lands owned by capitalists or cooperative factories and to refuse to place any ceilings on urban, professional incomes and wealth, while imposing land ceilings.

We want land reforms to strengthen and not to liquidate small-holdings. We want Village Development Councils and Service Cooperative Societies to reinforce the self-employed, industrious, free peasants who extract employment, national wealth and personal freedom from their tiny holdings.

I have had to warn our small-holders and other peasants about the dangerous implications of the Gramdan conception of landownership, soon after the Yelwal Conference of political momentum blessed that conception. Then several friends have been wondering why I have done so. I will state how I have understood that conception as being capable of being used against the vital interests of the majority of our people. I take it that according to that conception, all the land-holders in a village, after the ceilings have been enforced, will have to give up their pattas for their separate holdings and pool them into the single holding of the Village Panchayat which will then become the sole-pattadar, or land-holder. Supposing only a majority of the land-holders, most of whom would be small-holders agree to surrender their separate holdings while the minority decline to do so, what would happen? That question would come to be answered in varying ways by different State Legislatures and not according to any advice or opinion that Vinobajee or the other participants of the Yelwal conference might care to give at the present stage because, matters of such consequence, dealing with such important heritable and other rights over land holdings would have to be dealt with, as per the present or future constitutional provisions and legislative enactment. It may come to be said that after all when a majority of landholders agree to Gramdan, the minority should be willing to accept their decision and agree to throw in their lot with the majority and so, a correspondingly suitable provision may be incorporated in a state law and then it may be argued, that such legislation cannot be deemed as coercive. Or it may be argued that in order to conciliate the minority, legislation may insist upon the agreement

of 2/3 majority to any such Gramdan before the minority can be asked to fall in line with the majority. In either case, a minority will come to be forced to fall in line with a majority, whether it be a simple one or an absolute one or one of two thirds. We cannot be accused of merely conjuring up difficulties, since, in the case of legislation for consolidation of holdings, and cooperativisation of farmers the Punjab, Bombay and U.P Acts have already provided, on the lines of similar European Acts, for compelling the minority to fall in line, once the prescribed majority of land-holders agree to consolidation. Sri J.P. Narain and others have hinted at such legislative possibilities. It is also a moot question whether a State Legislature would confine the ascertainment of local public opinion only to land-holders or to all those whose main source of income is supposed to come from agriculture, whether or not they own land in the village or to all the residents of the village. Such decisions will come to be made by State legislatures in accordance with the prevailing temper and thought of the majority party then in power and the atmosphere of political factions, caste and group-obtaining in the concerned State. Moreover, once the present prejudice of the Planning Commission against small-holders and the predelections of the Commission and leaders of political parties in favour of Gramdan landownership come to be popularised by all the propaganda equipment of the Government and political parties, where would be the guarantee that the small-holders who wish o continue to enjoy their share of economic freedom, display of their initiative enterprise and creative efforts, be allowed to feel free to remain as independent, self-reliant agricultural producers? How could anyone contemplate

with any sense of equanimity the evil, unbearable and coercive atmosphere of electioneering that would grow in the wake of Governments or Panchayats, decision to ascertain the majority opinion regarding Gramdan in any village ? Should we not be warned by our present experience of Panchayat electioneering and Panchayat officers' behaviour during elections and administration's conduct in preparing voters lists and ministerial travails over village factions, caste-rivalries and other social disharmonies against venturing upon such a procedure to ascertain the degree of voluntariness and free-choice of small-holders and all other cultivators in any village regarding Gramdan ? Once the prevailing prejudice of the Planning Commission against small-holders comes to be accepted by large sections of our people, the creative energy and passion for greater and better productive efforts and keenness to invest all the care, labour and savings of their family in their agricultural work will come to be slowed down, if not dried up and the whole rural economy, which is so largely dependent upon the productive and creative activities of small-holders will come to be demoralised. Only the suicidal-minded could wish for such a demoralisation.

There is an equally strong objection to this dangerous conception of Gramdan landownership. It is a notorious fact in the everyday experience of us, rural people, and also admitted by the findings of the All India Agricultural Labour Enquiry conducted under the auspices of Government of India that our agricultural workers are unemployed for more than five months

in the year. It is also admitted by the Commission that within a measurable period of time *i.e*, till the end of the third Five Year Plan period, there will be no ostensible means of employing all these workers throughout the working part of the year. The survey has also brought out the fact that nearly half of our agricultural workers have been trying their best to augment their employment, through their own efforts, by working as share croppers, tenants or small-holders and the ownership and cultivation of the tiniest pieces of land is being looked upon as the highest possible opportunity to escape, even if it be for a few days, from the degradation and weakness of being mere wage earners and to gain self-employment. To the greatest section of these agricultural workers, the conception and talk of land reforms have so far meant the opportunity of retaining their tiny holdings, either with permanent ownership or periodical ownership or cooperative ownership or at least on fixed tenancy basis. The Gramdan landownership would spell the utmost disappointment and social blight upon the ardent, unappeased but age-long hopes of those workers who do not own or rent any land and also of those equally numerous workers who have secured small holdings, either as owners or as tenants in the hope of salvaging themselves from coolieism, either permanently or temporarily. When Governments see no earthly possibility, within the next ten years, of providing full-employment to our small-holders, would it not be cruel, to say the least, to deny them of their existing privilege of owning or renting even their present tiny holdings, in the name of reforms, and better production? Which agricultural worker, who now

cultivates his tiny holding can come to be so mesmerised as to believe that his rate of production per acre is lower than that of a big peasant or a cooperative farm or a Government farm, when actually his production happens to be about the highest possible yield in the village under the circumstances ?

The combined population of agricultural workers and tenants is smaller than that of cultivating owners. It cannot be difficult to visualise what would happen, when all the cultivating owners are also persuaded or coerced to part with their holdings and engage themselves under the employ of the village Panchayat to which all their lands would be handed over. It is a well-known fact, born out of the experience of all countries in the world, that when the size of a holding increases, the overhead supervisory and administrative costs would go up ; the demand for labour would be reduced and a large section of the hitherto employed people would come to be surplus. What would happen when this additional surplus and redundant labour of the earstwhile small-holders comes to be added to the already unemployed and under-employed agricultural workers ? How could our Governments tackle that almost over-whelming problem of unemployment ?

It is also necessary to think of the awful social consequences of such a transformation of the small-holders and other peasants into the labour surplus or reserve from which the Gramdan landowner, that is, the Panchayat Board, comes to choose only those whom it needs on any day or week or season for the work available on the lands. Whenever there is too much surplus labour seeking employment, and too limited work on

hand and there is only one employer the Panchayat without any fear of competition from any other employer, the social status, economic stamina and political rights of labour are sure to be dwarfed and cruelly perverted. Is it wrong for us to say that the present self-respecting, socially-scrupulous and family-minded and independent-spirited crores of small-holders will come to be metamorphosed into the wage-slaves ? Was it not to liberate labour from wage-slavery that Marx and Engels, the Christian Socialists Robert Owen and Saint Simon had desired Socialism ? Was it not to strengthen the self-employed artisans and to reincarnate the Guild-guided artisans from out of the modern proletariat that Socialists like G.D.H. Cole and R.H. Tawney had been dreaming of the establishment of Guild Socialism ? Will it not be the greatest tragedy that can befall to our crores of independent Kisans that during the largest portion of any work-day, they are to be forced to work under the orders of Supervisors or Masters, instead of being their own masters and employers ? I am sincerely convinced that the projected Gramdan economy would take India along the wrong, dangerous and suicidal path of increasing wage-slavery and managerial exploitation of land and agricultural population.

How can we believe, in the face of our detailed knowledge of the almost inevitable pitfalls of our present Panchayat administration, that the Gramdan Panchayat land-ownership would be a freely-chosen local leadership acceptable to all, dealing fairly with everyone and distributing opportunities for earning livelihood on land among all the working population in an equitable and

considerate manner ? How can we also accept that the management, cultivation of all the lands in the village and the utilisation of the produce obtained, can be carried on without the aid of a large number of supervisors, maistries, engineers, agronomists and office-staff, to be employed by the Panchayat but under statutory rules and to be paid the statutorily prescribed salaries, allowances, bonuses, provident funds, pensions and even wages ? Even as at present, so many of our Panchayats are obliged to appoint, in spite of their limited powers and functions and more limited funds, their executive officers, Sanitary Inspectors and so many others and assure them the scales of pay and allowances, prescribed by Government; and the powers of the Presidents and their Boards over their staff are strictly circumscribed.

It may be said by some that the lands of any village would be divided into five or ten blocks and the cultivation of each block would be entrusted to a separate cooperative farm and so many of the possible defects or evils of Panchayat land-ownership can be minimised, if not eliminated. But our contention is that Cooperative farming is also equally defective, can prove to be harmful and certainly not be productive. Cooperative farms also will suffer from all the defects and infirmities as the Gramdan Panchayat landowner. Its over-head charges will be too heavy. It will also not be able to provide employment to all the labour who will be allotted to its share, and endless disputes will arise, over the use of its discretion to choose some, dismiss more and neglect even larger numbers of people seeking employment, It will also suffer from all the troubles of arbitrary or harsh use of the majority-rule of the management. India will

take a pretty long time to learn to use the majority-rule of modern democracy in the highly responsible, considerate and sublimated manner, which is attained to some extent in the English Cooperative Societies and local authorities. Who knows what kind of perverted or sublimated majority-rule Indian Panchayat-Landowners will come to develop when they are endowed with such over-whelming powers not only over civic life but also over the whole range of economic life of the masses? Need we, should we, rush to take such a risk? And what for?

On the other hand, the present system of peasant family economy of utilising land has assured India, despite so many political upheavals through centuries, the enjoyment of full or partial economic independence by the largest section of our population. It has been coupled with the Kalakar family economy which also enabled our four crore artisans to carry on their professional occupations, mostly on their own, in their own homes and enjoy their economic freedom. They have had to content themselves with undeveloped implements and primitive methods of production, not so much because of their innate conservatism but because of centuries-old neglect of the State towards them. Now that the Swaraj India's State is ready to give them encouragement, occupational education and enlightenment and modern social aids, they have risen to the occasion, adopted new methods of production and better implements and are stepping up production by leaps and bounds. Let it be remembered that it is not so much our Kisans and Kalakars who are lagging behind as the Government in providing the minimum social and econo-

mic equipment necessary to ensure the best and largest production, by way of education, eommunications, credit supplies of raw materials and implements and modern marketing facilities.

When the Planning Commission and the enthusiasts of Gramdan Landownership and large scale cultivation and industrialisation and the zealots of greater and better production, try to contrast production per acre per individual Kisan or Kalakar with that of foreign farmers let them also compare and contrast the facilities—social, economic and even political—obtaining in such countries as the United Kingdom, U.S.A., Japan, France, Sweden, Denmark with that in our country. Let them remember how much more has to be done by our Government and commercial and industrial sectors to assist and encourage our agriculturists for many years to come before a parity can be reached with other countries. We, therefore, maintain that it is not fair for them to condemn our peasant family economy, in a one-sided manner, without giving due credit to our achievements.

We maintain without any fear of contradiction that our free, independent, non-exploitative toilers—Kisans and Kalakars—who form more than half the population provide the granite foundations, on which really full-fledged social democracy can be raised. We are convinced that India's economy based on our self-employed Kisan and Kalakar family management of creative and free labour, will form the best and largest base on which Guild Socialism can be built. And by progressing along this regenerated free and self-employed toilers path, India

can prove yet a new beacon to the rest of the world. It is with this conviction and in this faith that the Kisan and Kalakar Sammelans have made bold to sound their warnings against the proposed dangerous deviation of Gramdan landownership towards Managerial Privilegentsia and totalitarianism from village Panchayat upto the central Government at Delhi. We trust that the leaders of political parties will heed our warning, respect our love of economic freedom and appreciate the merits of our family farming economy. It is not fair nor is it progressive to discourage the self-employed cultivating landowners who form 46%, tenants, who form about 8% and Kalakars who form 10% of our total population by threatening to subvert their economy and destroying their freedom, through the encouragement of nationally-harmful alternatives. They should not take it ill if our Kisans and Kalakars try their best to organise themselves in order to protect their centuries-old freedom and self-employed social status. They should encourage them, on the other hand, to work more intensely to produce more by greater efforts and better methods, and to maximise the employment they wring out of land and their other occupations and obtain higher imcomes and reassure them of the continued family utilisation of their holdings.

We are impressed with the success achieved by the Service Cooperatives on the Handloom front. About a million handloom weavers have come into the cooperative fold and learnt to look to them for the supply of such raw materials as yarn, dyes, implements and weaving designs, and working capital, and of organising marketings through sales emporiams,

exhibitions etc. The weavers' Cooperation has thus come to be India's constructive contribution to producers' cooperation. We are anxious that similar all-out efforts should be made to provide our peasant masses with such service cooperatives. We are confident that constructive and substantial results can be achieved to step up both agricultural production, quantum of employment in agriculture and per capita peasants' income, if only Government would fully implement its plans, for Service Cooperatives as indicated in the Commission's Second Five Year Plan. Indeed, our peasants can come to be organically and constructively related to the rest of the planned economy through their service cooperatives and the socalled crisis for organisation can be eleminated. We are, therefore, glad that Prime Minister Nehru and Vinobajee have also expressed their faith in Service Cooperatives and we welcome particularly Vinobajee's declaration that he favours Service Cooperatives, and not land cooperatives ; that is exactly our own stand. Service cooperatives of independent peasant producers, like the weavers cooperatives, can become India's specially typical contribution. They will benefit our self-employed Kisans and Kalakars. But let us be warned that any initiation of the Chinese Land Cooperatives can only harm us and our country.

We are disappointed to find that the planning Commission hopes for the liquidation—if gradual—of the great mass of our small-holders with a view to consolidate their small-holdings into more economical basic holdings. This is proposed in the name of better and bigger production and more economical cultivation of land and larger incomes for those who will be left on the land.

But the Commission has not found it possible to indicate how the great majority of the displaced small-holders will come to be provided with equally good and useful alternative sources of employment, beyond expressing the vague hope that as the economic progress of the country develops, the industial economy will be able to absorb them. Such an approach to this gigantic problem cannot be either a responsible planning or a reform.

Moreover, the Commission does not seem to give full weight to the fact that all those who own and cultivate less than five acres are 50 to 66% and those who own between five and ten acres are 15 to 20% and all those who own less than ten acres in all form 80% of the total landholders of our country and that, farming as they do the majority of our peasant-families, they are just the people whose most important source of living ought not to be so adversely, cruelly and irresponsibly disposed of, with no other good enough ostensible source of living any where in the horizon of our national economy.

The much-prized basic holdings of the Commission's conception can only be between 10 to 15 acres and those who own them form only 6 to 10%. Are we to accept the proposal to be a reform or a progressive move, by which more than 80% of our peasants will become dispossessed of their lands, so that some 10% of them and the other 10% who own at present 10 to 15 acres of land may possibly come to own a little more economically big enough holdings ? That would be a strange enough proposal indeed !

What is it, we wish to achieve in our country through planning ? Surely not to convert peasants into

proletariat in the hope of salvaging these proletariat later on from proletarianism by enabling them to become Cooperative or political partners of a cooperativised or nationalised concern ! Surely not to deprive the means of economic freedom from bosses, employment under an impersonal employer, whether it be under a cooperative or a State concern and deny to the millions of our small-holders their present status of self-employment. To convert the family-led crores of peasants into wage and bonus earners, share-holding but helpless mass of voters in a majority-led cooperative, village Panchayat or State enterprise ! Such a fate cannot be progressive, economical or inspiring by any test.

We are anxious that Government should agree to implement in practice the general principle of parity between agricultural and industrial and commercial classes in the evaluation of their services to society and in fixing the prices of the products of their labour and services. All the world over this principle has come to be accepted during this post-war era. But it is only in the Western European Democracies—U.S.A., Canada, Australia, New Zealand—it is being implemented more or less satisfactorily at least in fixing food grains prices. When will our Government decide to shoulder this responsibility ?

I have been urging ever since 1923 upon the Government the need for fixing minimum wages for agricultural labour and relate them to the minimum prices to be paid for the principal crops. The Swaraj Government has included agricultural labour within the scope of the Minimum Wages Act but most of the State Govern-

ments have so far failed to implement it, because of the unreadiness of the Government of India to stand by them in fixing and implementing minimum levels of foodgrains prices. It is unfortunate that even when Government was prepared to maintain the floor-price levels of wheat and Rice, it should have failed to persuade state Governments to fix the minimum wages for those processes of work which are connected with the production of wheat and rice. It is even more unfortunate that both the peasants and workers should be getting more and more into the practice of demanding and paying cash wages, instead of continuing the old practice of payments in kind certainly by say 50% in view of the rising standards of living and their costs. But payment of wages in kind will insure the mutual relations between peasants and workers against the vagaries of rising or falling prices of foodgrains.

A REJOINDER TO SRI VINOBA BHAVE

I have seen Vinobajee's remarks on the far from satisfactory press reports of my speech of the 9th Oct., '57 at the Masulipatam Kisan Conference. It is not my desire to weaken his Bhoodan Yatra but I am anxious that Government and the Congress, the biggest party, and Vinobajee should recognise the national purpose served by the peasant economy and accord to it the protection and encouragement, status and strength, as are given to other economies.

If only Vinobajee had known, what so many of us, the founders and promoters of Village Panchayats, Cooperative Societies have come to know, about their obvious defects in working, to which I referred in my speech, he might not be so keen on entrusting the ownership, management, and actual cultiviation of all the village lands to them, in preference to the existing peasant economy of hundreds of small-holders in every village. Actually so many Panchayat Boards have not been able to achieve any signal success with their minimum civic responsibilities and very limited funds, what with the red-tapism and political influences associated with their dependence upon the Governmental Local Administration. It is of greater social significance that the pent-up or latent factious elements, caste-rivalries and other social disharmonies in our

social life have begun to find vent through Panchayat politics and to cause so much political and social disruption besides misery to the minority in Panchayat politics. Apart from the fairly frequent occasions of mismanagement of funds and inability to evoke villagers' response for reconstruction activities, most of the Panchayats have become weak in their civic appeal to the people because of their inability to achieve a progressive and cooperative relationship between the majority and minority groups. Under such circumstances, it should not be difficult for political realists to see the dangerous social consequences of entrusting to their care the ownership, management and actual cultivation of all the lands within the village and ask them to distribute among villagers the agricultural employment which forms 90% of the total employment available.

I can say that I have been an enthusiast of both Panchayats and cooperatives. I led the Panchayat movement in 1933-35 in Guntur District and helped to organise Panchayats in 700 out of the 960 villages of the District and I am even now keen on strengthening panchayat movement. I have also taken active part in the development of many primary cooperative credit societies, Loan and Sale, Marketing Cooperatives, besides working on the State-Level Cooperatives and so have most of my colleagues in the Kisan movement. We do therefore claim to know their uses as well as their limitations. We maintain that cooperatives and panchayats should not be entrusted with responsibilities which deal with the most intimate daily economic activities of our peasants. In fact the cooperative movement among the million cooperative weavers

leaves them free to work on their own in their homes with their own implements and similar should be the role of cooperatives among peasants.

It is not realistic to assume that Panchayats can manage the cultivation of lands without depending upon managerial staff because, even now big enough Panchayats are statutorily obliged to appoint paid executive officers over whom both the Panchayats and State Governments have joint control with all its obvious weaknesses. The valuable clarification given by Vinobajee is very welcome ; that he contemplates only the establishment of service cooperatives and not Land Cooperatives. That is exactly what so many of us have been urging upon the Government. Only recently the Prime Minister has happily offered to utilise the Service Cooperatives. but the Democles Sword of Cooperative farming and Village Panchayat landlordism with all their dangers are still being held over our peasants.

The Indian peasants, more especially of the South, have been organising to the best of their resources such Service Cooperatives as the Cooperative Banks, Loan and Sale Societies, Processing Factories, Marketing Societies, and they are welcoming what all support the Government can offer.

When Vinobajee is prepared to contemplate the division of village lands into blocs for separate cultivation, I trust that it is not too much to expect him to recognise the much better and more productive utilisation of land by hundreds of small-holders of a village, reinforced as they would be by Service Cooperatives who can and invest

much more of their labour, display greater spirit of enterprise initiative and creative energy than would ever be possible when they have to work under the orders of even their elected chiefs and the management of their majority-led cooperative farm or panchayat land-owner.

Service Cooperatives and Panchayats can reinforce the obvious advantages of the peasant family-farming economy and thus national interests as well as the economic freedom and social security now. enjoyed by our peasants, can be fully insured and promoted.

Pay Remunerative Prices for Agricultural Commodities

The question of what are reasonable and remunerative price levels to be accepted by Government and consumers on one side and peasants and processors on the other has to be settled as soon as possible. This has had a long history of Governments' futile attempts to tackle this matter. The price stabilisation Committee of 1943-45, the Food Grains Price Policy Committee of 1948-49 over which Shri V. T. Krishnamachari presided recommended that an effort should be made to stabilise food grains prices at a remunerative level. Sir Theodre Gregory also strengthened that proposition. Bengal Famine Commission also held the same view. Thus, the two decade-long demand of the Kisan Sammelan for stabilisation of foodgrains prices received authoritative endorsement. The Economic Programme Committee, as well as the National Planning Sub-committee and the Agrarian Reforms Committee of the Congress, of all of which I also happened to be a member, also made the suggestion. The Planning Cammission too accepted this

in both the Five Year Plans but made no financial provision to ensure the implementation of this policy. The credit goes to the late Rafi Ahmad Kidwai to have rushed to the rescue first of the Wheat-producers and later of the Rice-producers when during 1953 food grains prices fell by more than 30% and peasants were sustaining heavy losses. He assured peasants that Government would try its best to maintain wheat price at Rs. 10 per maund and Rs. 17 per bag of paddy of two maunds. That assurance alone proved very effective in preventing further fall in prices and in achieving their slow recovery, thus demonstrating, as we had long been stating from the Kisan Sammelan, that to stabilse food grains prices would not be too costly, nor would it involve Government in too much of unforeseeable financial risks. Even if the financial risks and responsibilities were to prove too great it is the duty of Government to shoulder them. Let our national leaders realise the strength of the feeling of our peasants, that when it is prepared to spare Rs. 22 crores per annum to subsidize mostly urban consumers of food grains, it would not be unreasonable to expect it to be prepared to spare at least as much of protect peasants who are many times more numerous, and economically more vulnerable.

APPENDIX

1.	India's population in 1951	3613 lakhs
2.	Population engaged in agriculture	71.8%
3.	Among these, owner cultivators (more than 80% of these own less than 10 acres)	1673 lakhs
4.	Tenant-cultivators	316 lakhs
5.	Self-employed agriculturists (3+4) That is, more than half the total population.	1989 lakhs
6.	Cultivating labourers.	448 lakhs
7.	Landlords (Rentiers)	53 lakhs
8.	15 percent of Harijans and 85 percent of Tribal people enjoy today the status of self-employed, cultivating peasants and all others are only too keen on gaining this status either by obtaining individual possession of Government's cultivable waste land which is one third of as much as all the occupied and cultivated area and lands above the ceilings and Bhoodan lands	

The advocates of village Panchayat Land townership want to deprive 1989 lakhs of self-employed agriculturits of their status of full or partial economic freedom and independence from the disabilities of proletarianism in order that 448 lakhs of agricaltural workers may be given the satisfaction that four times as many more are also brought down to their unhappy level of wage-slavery.

The 1951 Census and Agricultural Labour Survey have demonstrated that the 448 lakhs of agricultural workers are employed from 180 to 245 days in the year in most parts of India and the Planning Commission pleads inability to suggest any specific schemes for providing them work for these 3 to 4 months of their unemployment. Yet, the champions of Panchayat Land ownership and Planning Commission are prepared to advocate the creation of as big cooperaive holdings as to embrace one or two villages, fully knowing that such a transformation can only lead to making redundant more than half of the present self-employed peasants (1989 lakhs). They do not seem to have the vaguest idea of how to provide alternative emploment to the hundred million peasants who will be thus displaced. It will satisfy them if that hundred million displaced peasants also are degraded to the same deplorable position as agricultural workers, while even the other hundred million peasants are deprived of their self-employed status and turned into the employees of their socalled cooperatives and their armies of officials and experts. Is it not essential to remember that when 66.3% of the expenditure of an average household in rural areas is incurred on food alone, it is in the national interest that such an essential need of 70% of our population is being mostly satisfied by the self-employed peasants, without the Government being burdened by the responsibility of having to produce all the needed food and feed them ? More and more Service Cooperatives are needed by our peasants and Labour Cooperatives by our agricultural workers and both peasants, and workers are ready to join such cooperatives, but it is the Government, which is unable to eliminate the existing structural dificiencies

such as lack of credit, ware-housing, processing, preserving and marketing facilities. It is a big enough challenge to all the resources of our Governments in finances, know-how, organisational abilities and statesmanship to achieve not in five but in ten years to come, as suggested by Sir Malcolm Darling who was invited by Government in 1957, the targets set up in the Second Five Year Plan, not to speak of their venturing upon the uncharted adventure of persuading about twenty crores of our self-employed peasants to embrace profeterianism under the aegis of Cooperative Farming and Village Landlordism.

Some Opinions on Co-operative Farming

"That, despite the findings of the Indian Cooprative Union, regarding the dismal failure of experiments in Cooperative farming in India and the new trends away from State controlled collectivism in agriculture manifest in Polond, Yugoslavia and other Communist countries, the India Government should pin their faith to Cooprative Farming as the panacea for Indian agriculture seems strange............In this matter Mr. N. G. Ranga is perhaps a surer judge of peasant psychology and he was catagorically of the view that the peasant's attachment to his holding was so great that he would not willingly agree to merging it in a Cooprative. Mr. Ranga was even more right when he suggested that there were other ways of improving the yeild of land than by Cooprative farming".

The Hindu, 1-8-57

"Gramdan dissolves property altogether, and instals the village community in power. Public ownership is supposed to be the panacea for all social ills............But

Vinoba does not realise that...........colleagues of his, official and aon-official, support him for their own ends—that is, for making Gramdan channel for introducing collectivisation which spells the doom of the peasants. Prof. Ranga has declared that this is...........depriving the peasant of his land...........Professor Ranga has been a leader of the peasants for two or more decades now, and he certainly knows more about land problems and Communism than the Gandhian saint".

The Indian Libertarian,
15 Nov., 1957,

Dr. Otto Schiller in his "Cooperative Farming and Individual Farming on Cooperative Lines" :—

In communist countries "tendencies have been evidenced for a partial individualisation of collective work. Exact records of work contributed by each member are needed to make collective farming efficient, which in turn means relatively high administrative expenses." All this can be avoided if Cooperative farming is organised on the basis of individual use of land. The example of Japan and some European countries shows, however, that the productivity per acre in small holdings can be as high, if not higer than in large farms."

So "Cooperative farming in its usual form, namely with joint or collective use of land, a new type of Cooperative Farming may be advocated, namely, "Individual Farming on Cooperative lines."

Quoted in "Kurukshetra"
Dec., 1957

BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

1. Credo of World Peasantry
2. Towards World Peace
3. Revolutionary Peasants
4. Colonial and Coloured Peoples
5. The Modern Indian Peasant
6. World Role of National Revolution
7. Kisan Speaks
8. Outlines of National Revolutionary Path
9. Kisan Mazdoor Praja Raj
10. Students Role in Colonial Revolution
11. Economic Programme of Kisan Sammelan
12. Labour in South India
13. India in International Peasants' Organisation
14. Food Controls versus Peasants
15. Food Plan
16. Communists and Kisans
17. Economics of the Handloom and others.

CREDO OF WORLD PEASANTRY
TOWARDS WORLD PEACE
REVOLUTIONARY PEASANT

BY

PROF. N. G. RANGA

"I am glad your services are being so widely and appreciatively recognised."

—G. D. H COLE

"Let us hope that a new day will dawn for world peasants, and when that time comes your name will always be associated with those of India on whose behalf you have toiled so long and devotedly."

—GEORGE PADMORE,
Pan-African Congress

"A most impressive work which bears witness to not only to encyclopaedic knowledge but also to a fervent and enlightned spirit."

—TROTT
of Monetary Times, Toranto

"Professor Ranga ... on the present occasion is emblematic of democratic freedom. His standing as an economist of distinction with unrivalled comprehension of the problems affecting land ... remains unchallenged."

—SWARAJYA,
Madras

"I met him in England in 1946— at a world conference of primary Producers and putting the case of millions of small cultivators all over the world who feed the greater part of mankind between them and yet are constantly left out of the expert's calculations......When a man has a true vision to guide him and yet looks always at the realities under his eyes, seeks not office or personal eminence, but what he knows to be the welfare of the people, first, last and all the time, his life cannot be a mistake nor his work unfruitful."

—Dinah Stock